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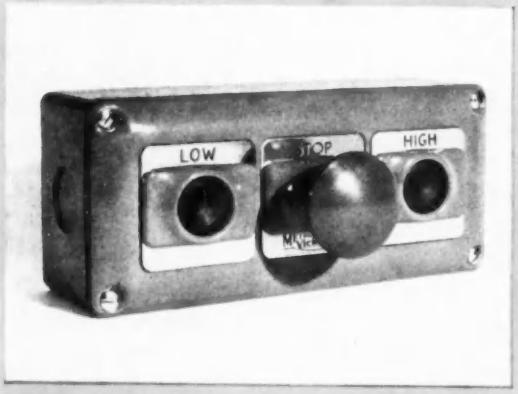

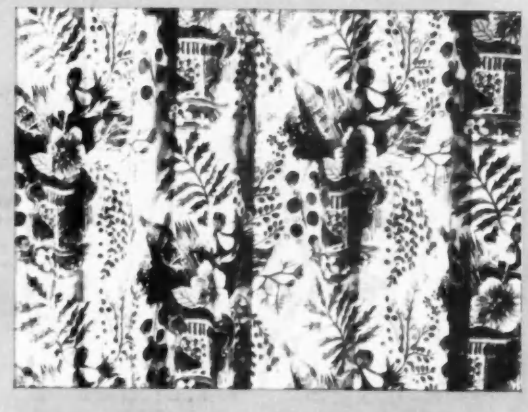

MAY 1952 NUMBER 41

The Council of Industrial Design

PRICE TWO SHILLINGS

Scene reconstructed by Roy Carruthers

TO THE MECHANICALLY MINDED, 1895 was an exciting year. In spite of stringent Highways Acts, people were driving the first few horseless carriages on the public roads — frequently without the man with a red flag who should have preceded them and exceeding the speed limit of 4 m.p.h. British engineers were building their first cars; a new industry had been founded. And that same year the foundations of another great enterprise had been laid. At Tovil, Albert E. Reed had begun to make super-calendered newsprint at his first paper mill acquired the previous year. Successfully reviving other mills, he was soon to be known as "the Wizard of the South" and to build up an unrivalled reputation as a manufacturer of super-calendered printing papers, including newsprint. From this beginning, not sixty years ago, has grown the vast paper-making enterprise of the Reed Paper Group, producing today an ever-increasing tonnage of British newsprint and the largest output of Kraft paper in the whole of Europe.

Reed

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PAPER GROUP

The waterfront of Reed's Aylesford mills on the River Medway

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Design

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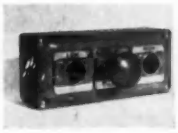

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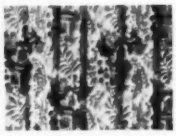

Salad bowl and servers (page 32)

Austin Reed drawer pull (page 24)

The wictims o' gammon

TONY WELLER might have been a star caption-writer in Fleet Street if he hadn't stuck to the road. His shrewd common sense enabled him to see clearly that the ministrations of the Shepherd were not unconnected with the generous entertainment by Mrs Weller, mostly on pineapple rum in the snug bar of the Marquis of Granby. Her firm belief in the impostor led to his confiding to Sam that such women were "the wictims o' gammon."

If we are honest we all have to admit that we are taken in at times. Indeed, as Chesterton said of Pickwick himself, he was one of those great souls who was not afraid of being taken in and therefore saw the inside of many things which the suspicious inevitably miss. Yet none of us likes to be taken in all the time.

There is one delusion which crops up persistently in connection with the work of the CoID. It is that first-rate British contemporary design will never be saleable in certain markets where reproductions have been best-sellers for years. The theory, which has never been thoroughly tested, was clearly stated by a speaker from the audience after the Director of the Council had addressed the British Pottery Manufacturers' Federation in Stoke-on-Trent a short time ago: he said it would be "utterly and absolutely futile" to adopt contemporary designs in the factories today. Customers all over the world were asking for their traditional kind of design.

Similar statements have been made in the textile, glass, cutlery, silverware and other trades. Often they are backed up by a story of some half-hearted attempt to market an article which represented a low standard of design anyway.

Let us look at the facts. In the eighteenth century we in Britain built up such an immense reputation for contemporary design in everything connected with the home that we have lived on it ever since. Our ancestors' energy, good taste and inquiring minds have lulled us into thinking we can largely dispense with such qualities. Instead of copying their example and evolving our own solutions, we have copied their *products*, as best we can, often using quite different materials and techniques. While we have been doing this, the manufacturers of Sweden and Italy (and of the USA) have been building up a deserved reputation in America and elsewhere for contemporary

design, in which there is rapidly growing interest.

It is certainly true that many English firms have been copying and adapting old designs for so long that original thinking on this subject leads them into uncharted seas. Perhaps one of our greatest dangers at the moment is complacency in accepting an astonishingly low standard in many of the details of our daily life. But our most intelligent customers abroad will respect only our highest standards – our best printing, our new schools, our display techniques, our jet engines. When whole trades say with pride that Americans think very highly of their great-grandfathers' work but despise theirs and will not buy it, and from this argue that there is some special dispensation which ensures that there will *always* be a steady demand for traditional designs in America, ought they not to ask themselves whether they may not be "the wictims o' gammon"? G.R.

Notebook

GUIDANCE FOR THE CONSUMER is a subject in which all consumers ought to be interested; especially so, those consumers who are also manufacturers or designers. Various publications have touched on the subject; the Association of Scientific Workers has now produced a booklet* devoted wholly to it. This Association has for many years favoured the formation of a national consumer-research organisation, believing that consumers cannot be adequately protected without such an organisation. The booklet includes detailed recommendations for its establishment, staffing and working.

Why are the scientific workers interested? One reason is that "industrial scientists often find that part of their duties may consist in doctoring products so as to deceive the purchasers, at any rate temporarily. The only remedy for this is to employ other scientists to reveal such deceptions."

Why is DESIGN interested? The value of any product to the consumer so manifestly depends to a large extent on its design that this question needs no answer.

"CONTEMPORARY OR CONTEMPTUOUS FURNITURE?" This headline appeared over two pages of lively correspondence in the 29 March issue of *The Cabinet Maker*, which deserve the attention of anyone interested in this subject.

J. Scott Morton, director of Sheard Binnington and Co Ltd, of Doncaster, perhaps said more in less space than any other of the *Cabinet Maker*'s correspondents when he replied to a previous writer in this way:

"Mr Siddall starts off by showing that he has a dreadfully defeatist policy when he says: '. . . in design there is not a lot one can do with a bedstead if one is to carry out certain fundamental desires which the public demands. . . .' That is exactly the reason why manufacturers do employ '. . . the designers with strings of letters after their names' of whom Mr Siddall so disparagingly speaks. Surely if he has now got to the state where he finds that he cannot improve on a bedstead, it is time that someone with fresh, new ideas (a designer perhaps?) was there to assist him."

TRADE PRESS: *Printing Review* has issued its twenty-first birthday number (Spring 1952) and celebrated the occasion by a redesign of its own pages. In his editorial introduction C. W. Cousland writes of the printing industry as "sometimes bedevilled by a hesitant, negative attitude to design": the *Review*'s aim is "to point out a safe, yet stimulating path which will lead upwards in sales, prestige and aesthetic satisfaction."

Another trade journal with a close interest in design has been making even more conspicuous changes. With its April issue, *Furnishing* has abandoned pocket size in favour of a page-size almost twice as large. A more spectacular display of the journal's contents is thus made possible: the advertisers have not risen to the challenge as well as *Furnishing*'s editorial layoutman has done.

BAD DESIGN, BAD BUSINESS: "In a recent case, United States firms remarked favourably upon a certain product offered [by a British manufacturer], and the price, but declined to discuss handling the article because of the unattractive and cheap-looking labels." This sorry story is not the invention of a design propagandist, but a quotation from a sober official document, dealing with the American market for toilet goods and druggists' sundries, prepared for the Board of Trade Commercial Relations and Exports Department by the Commercial Counsellor at the British Embassy in Washington. In a competitive market, pack as well as product must be right in design. A.D.

* *Spotlight on Shopping* (A Sc W, 15 Half Moon Street, London W 1, price 1s).

Appearance design in the A E I Companies

by Paul Reilly

"THAT WASN'T DESIGNED, it was a straight engineering job," said the engineer, pointing to a piece of electrical equipment.

There is much to study in that simple confession. In the first place it was said by an engineer-designer who, having spent his life working for one of our proudest companies, admits that he has not until recent years considered the appearance of the equipment for which he is responsible.

Secondly, it shows a sound understanding of the difference between the appearance designer and the engineering draughtsman, a distinction that is often overlooked in many industries.

Thirdly, through its very awareness of the problem of appearance, the statement contains a warning; there is a danger that "appearance design" may become fashionable in our engineering industries, that enthusiasm for tidying and cleaning up engineering designs may lead to a divorce between function and appearance and to the emergence of a new specialist, the stylist, who comes along at the end of the process to give a top-dressing of current fashion. That road is a blind alley strewn with pitfalls in the shape of tiresome clichés, datable features, form-glamour and voguish shapes which may for the moment be in the air but which have little place in products whose useful life will certainly outrun a passing fashion.

Recognition of the importance of appearance and harmonious assembly in the engineering industries is long overdue, but to hasten the process by straining after effects to catch the eye is not the answer. The goal should be to achieve a result that is anonymous in the sense that, though appearance has been considered from the outset, the finished job seems so eminently suitable and satisfactory that one is not conscious of the thought that has gone into it.

These questions have been discussed before in DESIGN and no attempt has been made to belittle the problems; to find an appearance designer who is modest enough not to want to stamp his personality on a machine is as difficult as to find, within an organisation, an engineer-designer who is artist enough to do the job unaided.

It was with such thoughts in mind that I recently accepted the invitation of the Chairman of the Appearance Design Sub-Committee of the Associated Electrical Industries (AEI) Group of Companies to visit some of the works at Peterborough, Rugby, and Trafford Park, Manchester. I was given the opportunity of seeing at first hand how the design policy of this vast organisation is worked out in practice. And what I saw and heard was so full of promise that I asked permission to publish a report in these pages. And in view of the now enlightened design policy of the AEI Group I can reveal that the statement quoted at the beginning of this article was made by an engineer designer on the staff of one of the senior companies in the Group.

AEI comprises a group of companies engaged in the design and manufacture of all manner of electrical equipment from turbo-generators to electric light bulbs. The group controls five main companies and a number of closely linked smaller companies; the main companies are the British Thomson-Houston Co (BTH), Metropolitan-Vickers Electrical Co, Edison Swan Electric Co, Ferguson Pailin Ltd, and the Hotpoint Electric Appliance Co. The principal other companies include Premier Electric Heaters Ltd, the International Refrigerator Co, Newton-Victor Ltd (X-ray and medical equipment), Newton and Co (op-

tical equipment), and Sunvic Controls Ltd (electric-circuit control switches). The Group employs a total of some 63,000 people. It is, in short, one of the most powerful, important and diverse organisations in our electrical engineering industry.

Partly owing to the independent origins of the component companies and partly to a wise policy of decentralisation, there is a healthy measure of competition between the various factories making nearly similar products. Each company is a self-contained unit but all follow approximately the same form of internal organisation with a board of executive directors heading specialist management groups concerned with engineering design, manufacture, research, trading, etc. Each company has its own engineering design staff who are specialists in particular pieces of equipment; the total number of engineer-designers and draughtsmen employed by the Group exceeds 3,000.

In most of the products made by the Group efficient function is the predominant factor in the design. The designers and draughtsmen have in general been trained to that end and no other. In heavy electrical engineering even functional design evolves slowly; the design of electrical equipment often starts two to four years before production begins and the normal life of the equipment may range from ten to thirty years or more. It was pointed out to me as I went through the BTH plant at Rugby that a young designer might start on a job when he is twenty-six years old and might be thirty before any mistakes would be found out. When so much is at stake, appearance design must seem of trivial importance.

It is the more remarkable therefore that appearance design has, by a decision of the main AEI Board, inspired by the then Chairman, the Rt. Hon. Oliver Lyttelton, been raised from a Cinderella status to something approaching a major issue of policy.

The directive which set the ball rolling was issued in January 1949. It accepted the proposition that in a competitive market the prestige attaching to good appearance might be enough to tip the balance even for highly technical products, and that for certain stock items, particularly those serving the home, it would probably be decisive. Although the individual companies had up to a point already been considering these questions through their engineering departments, or had in some cases already appointed design consultants and even staff designers to oversee details of appearance, this directive established a procedure to be observed by all. It set up an Appearance Design Sub-Committee of the main AEI Engineering Committee. Within the Group the general organisation of policy on design rests with this top Engineering Committee, which has as its members the Managing Directors and Chief Engineers of the senior Group companies. The new permanent Sub-Committee on Appearance Design was to be composed of senior engineering representatives from each of the principal

Ediswan lighting fittings

Light fittings present some of the most difficult design problems. The designer must not subordinate efficiency to appearance but at the same time he must have an eye for the contemporary interior. A modest solution is often better (as in the Edison Swan fluorescent fitting, above, comprising light alloy castings, a single piece of shaped white opal Perspex and two 5-ft. 80-watt tubular lamps) than a determined composition (such as the rigid grouping of conical shapes in the same company's dining-room pendant, on right).

companies under the chairmanship of a member of the main AEI Engineering Committee.

The functions of this Sub-Committee are best shown by quoting from the actual directive of January 1949:

> This Sub-Committee will meet not less frequently than quarterly; it will be responsible for maintaining a panel of consultants on appearance design and will advise Group Companies as to what consultants are available, their addresses and the type of work on which they specialise. The Sub-Committee will not be responsible for approving individual designs, which remains the responsibility of the Design Department concerned, but the Sub-Committee will be responsible for general procedure, for ensuring that the routine is followed, and for taking care of the AEI policy of maintaining a high standard of appearance of its products.
>
> Thus the main AEI board ruled out from the start one of the perennial obstacles to good design, namely designing by committee. The Appearance Design Sub-Committee is *not* an approving body; its main function is to see that the proper procedure is observed.

The next paragraph of the directive outlined this procedure:

> When a new design is to be introduced, the Design Engineer will contact directly one of the Consultants on Appearance Design, preferably at the earliest reasonable stage in the design, and obtain his assistance in arriving at a design which has the best possible appearance while retaining all essential requirements of performance, ease of manufacture, economy of materials, etc. This procedure will not alter the existing routine by which new designs are discussed by Trading Group Committees or by Commercial and Manufacturing Departments.

There in a nutshell is the kernel of a sane design policy: the proper use of a consultant; consideration of appearance at an early stage; care for performance and for economy of manufacture; and maintenance of the all-important consultations with the production and sales sides of the business.

That the terms of reference of the AEI Appearance Design Sub-Committee were at first limited to certain lines of apparatus such as light fittings, domestic appliances, refrigerators, meters, instruments, medical and cinematograph equipment was quite logical, for it is in such products that looks count most; but the hope was expressed that as the idea caught on other apparatus such as switchgear and control-gear would be put through the same hoop. And this has in fact happened. In all the factories I visited, I was told that the infection is spreading; indeed I saw good evidence of this at Trafford Park, where Metrovick switchgear is now coming under the eye of their consultant with very good results.

The practical application of this directive varies, of course, with individual products, but the usual practice is for the engineering department of a Group company to submit either drawings or photographs of the proposed product together with a statement that an appearance designer has been consulted; if the appearance designer is not already on the list main-

BTH controller

The appearance of the BTH controller for diesel electric locomotives has radically changed over the last 25 years. Originally the dials, switches and levers were distributed round the driver's cab. They are now concentrated on one compact unit which is itself free from awkward angles and corners. There remains, as so often in electrical engineering, the intractable question of the design and lettering of the instrument dials. This is probably a question for the industry as a whole rather than for any particular company, as many dials must be bought in from outside.

tained by the AEI Appearance Design Sub-Committee, details of his qualifications and industrial experience must also be submitted. The Sub-Committee then endorses the design, retaining one copy of the photograph or drawing for the central file.

This system is designed to allow the maximum flexibility and company initiative, for the Group companies in general have their own Appearance Design Committees consisting of senior engineers and the company's representative on the AEI Sub-Committee. The method of dealing with the design consultant (*i.e.*, whether he should be employed *ad hoc*, retained, or taken on to the staff) is left largely to the individual companies. They usually retain the services of an established designer, at the same time encouraging members of their staff to take an interest in appearance design by exchanging ideas with the consultant, by attending lectures and by taking refresher courses on the subject. Where a design is produced by a staff engineer, the consultant must approve it before it is submitted to the AEI Sub-Committee.

Looked at from the outside, this seems a proper pattern for a design policy in as complex an organisation as AEI. Looked at from the inside, it reveals some weakness as well as much strength, and both are aspects of the human element. The most vulnerable factor is the selection of the consultant designer. It is fair to say that there are not yet enough good ones to go round, though one must also admit that AEI have been pretty quick off the mark in handpicking their men. But the need for a longer list to choose from is also clear in certain cases. It does not follow that because a designer can rationalise a mining control desk or a dragline control chair he will also be sensitive to contemporary thought as expressed in interior design; he may not also be the best man to design a ceiling pendant light or even a fluorescent fitting for commercial use.

But in his capacity as an outside consultant, more is demanded of the designer than that he should be a good designer. As was said in this journal's February editorial, "such a man would need to be much more than an industrial designer in the narrow sense. He would have to be a man of wide interests, tolerant and gregarious." He must, in fact, "muck in." This is a question of human relations and mutual confidence, and in the early stages of such a design policy as

BTH walking drag-line control gear

A recent example of the good results of calling in the services of a consultant designer is this arrangement of the driver's gear and controls for the giant walking drag-line now in operation at Corby.

AEI's, it is probably the most delicate of issues. A design policy needs to be sold right through an organisation and particularly in the drawing offices. It is a question of internal public relations and education, and a great deal depends on the personalities of the chosen consultants.

From the frank conversations I had with many of the engineer designers in the factories, I have little doubt that the ice is now broken and that the natural suspicions of the insider for the outsider will soon disappear. In fact I discovered a determination among staff engineers not only to learn from the consultant designer but eventually to beat him at his own game. This was most noticeable where it might have been least expected, at the Hotpoint plant, for in that company's products appearance is often from fifty to seventy per cent of the job, and outside "interference" could easily have been resented on such a major issue. Umbrage would be likely to be less where, as in the case of industrial equipment, the objections of the consultant might appear to the engineer to be matters of unimportant detail. And yet, even in such cases, I found at Trafford Park an awareness by the engineers of what the consultant and the staff appearance designer were getting at; the engineers were looking at their products with fresh and critical eyes.

The strength of the AEI policy lies in the fact that the Board and the engineer directors of the Group companies seem to be convinced of the ultimate commercial importance of standards of appearance in their products. They are aware of the need but also of the obstacles. They know that things cannot be changed overnight. But by tackling the problem from both ends, by maintaining the Board's interest and at the same time enthusing the young staff designers, by recognising the importance of appearance design both in the composition of a power-house installation and in the details of minor equipment such as dials, nameplates and instruction panels, their policy must succeed in the long run. That their message (even the word "gospel" was used in more than one factory) has taken root is witnessed by the present illustrations. It will be interesting to report again in two years' time.

The author is indebted for much of the information in this article to the Appearance Design Sub-Committee of A E I and particularly to its present Chairman, G. S. C. Lucas, OBE, of B T H.

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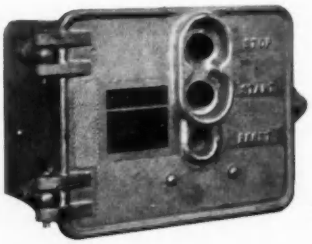


1933

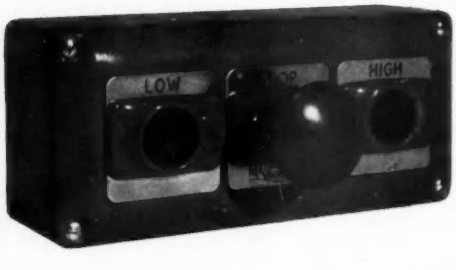
The problem was to design a housing that affords instant recognition of the buttons but at the same time shields them from accidental pressing. The process of tidying the appearance has developed in three stages. On the right is the mock-up of the design that is about to go into production.

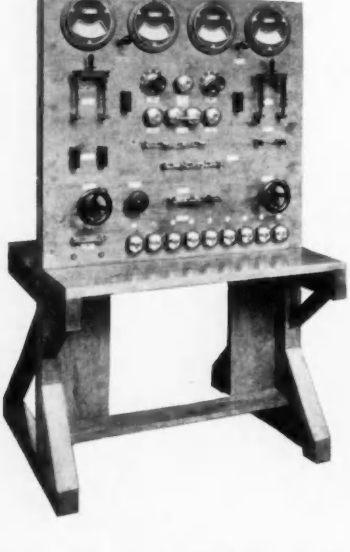
1948

1952

Metrovick push-button control stations

Earlier types of "station" were usually rather heavy, of cast iron (top left); later, types were developed for special jobs using plastic mouldings to give cleaner effects for light-duty stations (above). The latest type (top right) comprises a basic unit to house buttons, switches, lamps, etc, assembled either horizontally or vertically into groups of one, two or three. The three-point station (right) includes a raised mushroom-head for emergency striking.





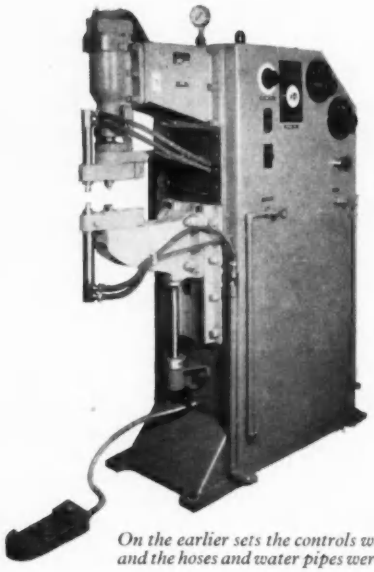
The equipment was originally mounted on vertical wooden panels.

Metrovick single-phase meter testing equipment

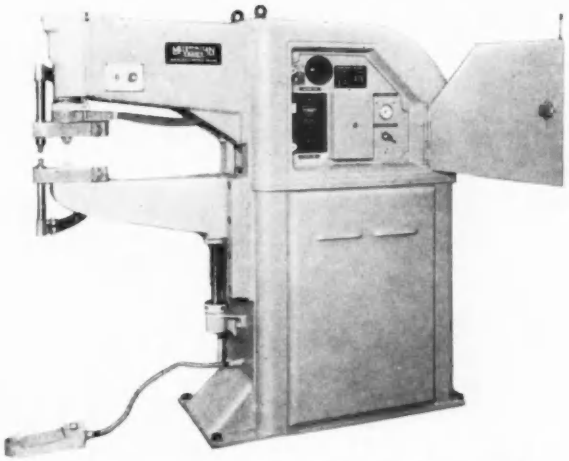
They were succeeded by more mobile units, but the parts were still mounted as if on a board.

Still many projections, but the flat top was raised for easier operating.

Metrovick spot-welding equipment

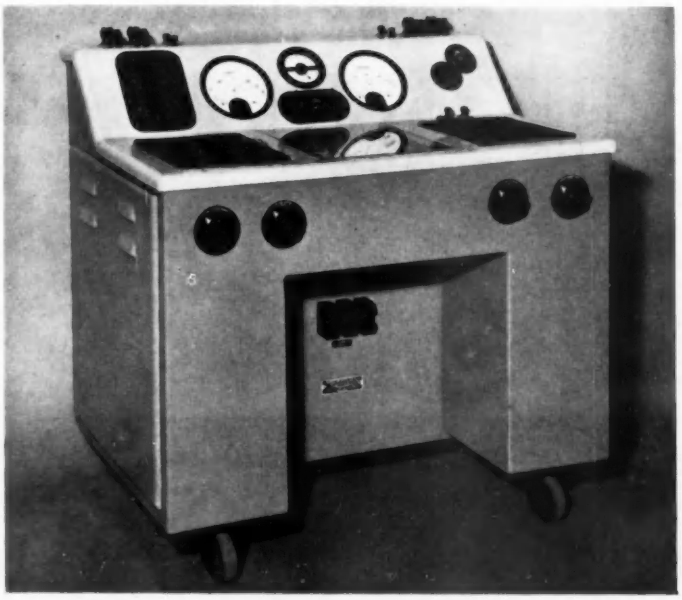


On the earlier sets the controls were mounted externally and the hoses and water pipes were carried on the outside.



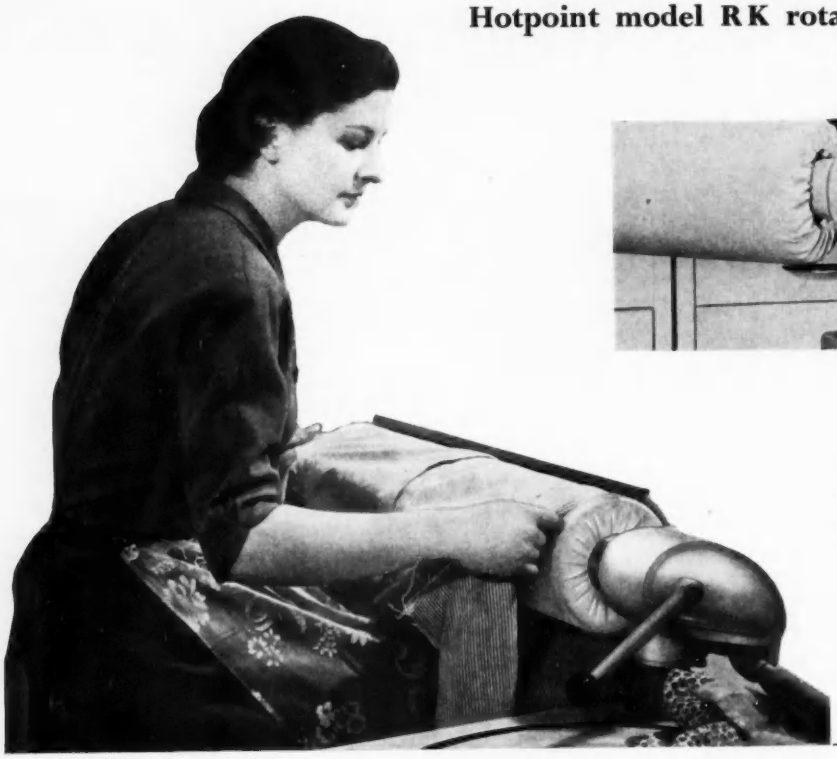
The latest versions, still in process of development, use a cast top which screens all the pre-set controls behind a hinged panel. The pipes and hoses are also tidied away.

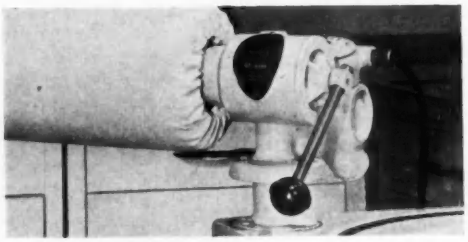
Provision was next made for the operator to sit comfortably at a form of knee-hole desk.



Plywood-on-angle-iron gave way to steel-on-angle-iron with a top formed in one piece. The latest model, above, uses folded sheet steel construction, giving unbroken surfaces but maintaining the convenient desk arrangement.

Hotpoint model RK rotary ironer

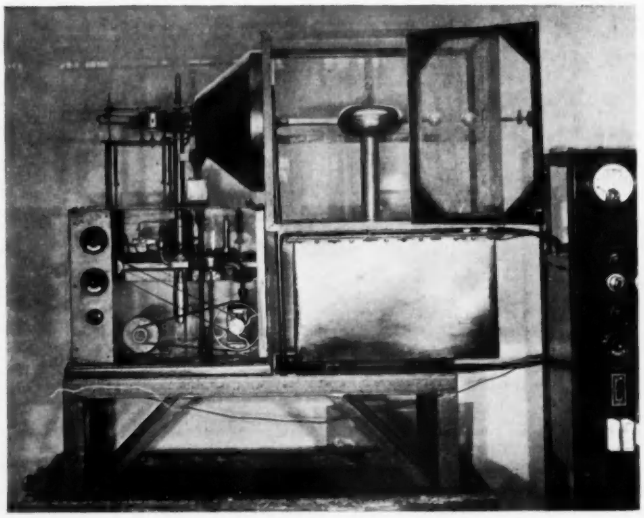


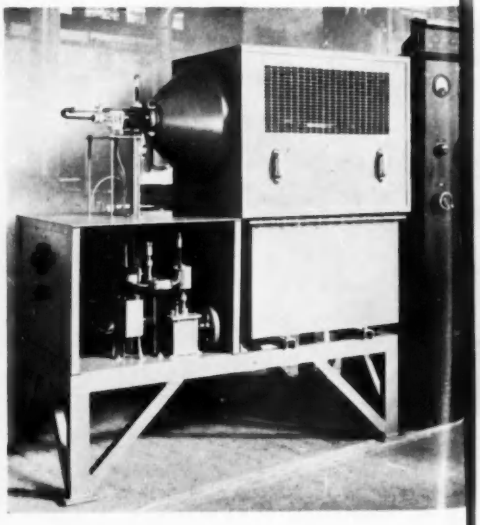


Above, the control end before redesign. Left, the new comfortable handle and the easy-to-clean housing.

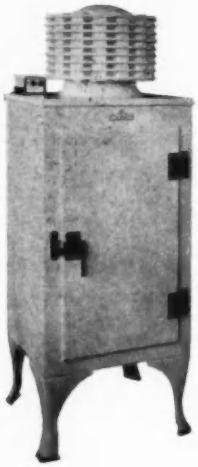
Newton-Victor

Crystallographic X-ray sets have come a long way since the early experimental equipment (below left). The first design to be made in quantities used standard construction for panels, etc, such as is used in ordinary industrial cubicles (below right) . . .





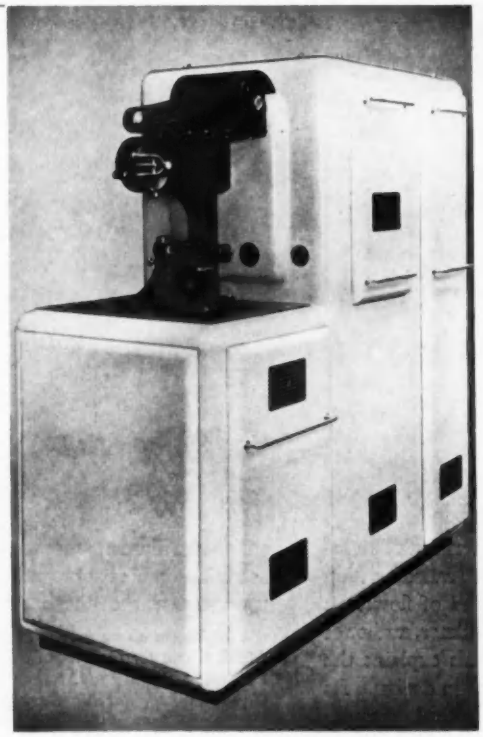
Refrigerators

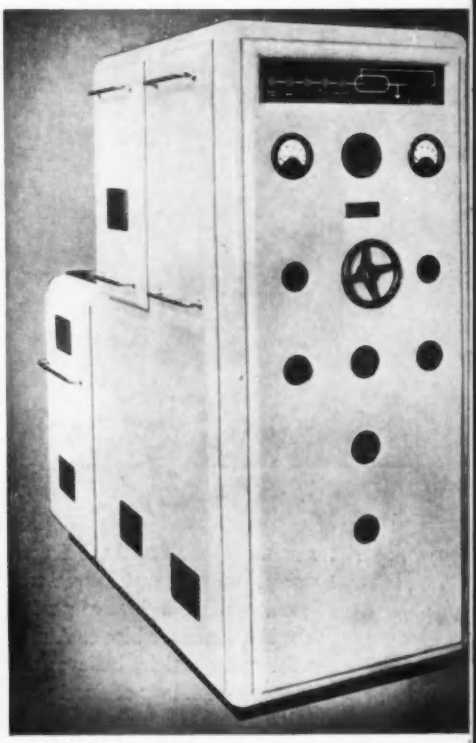


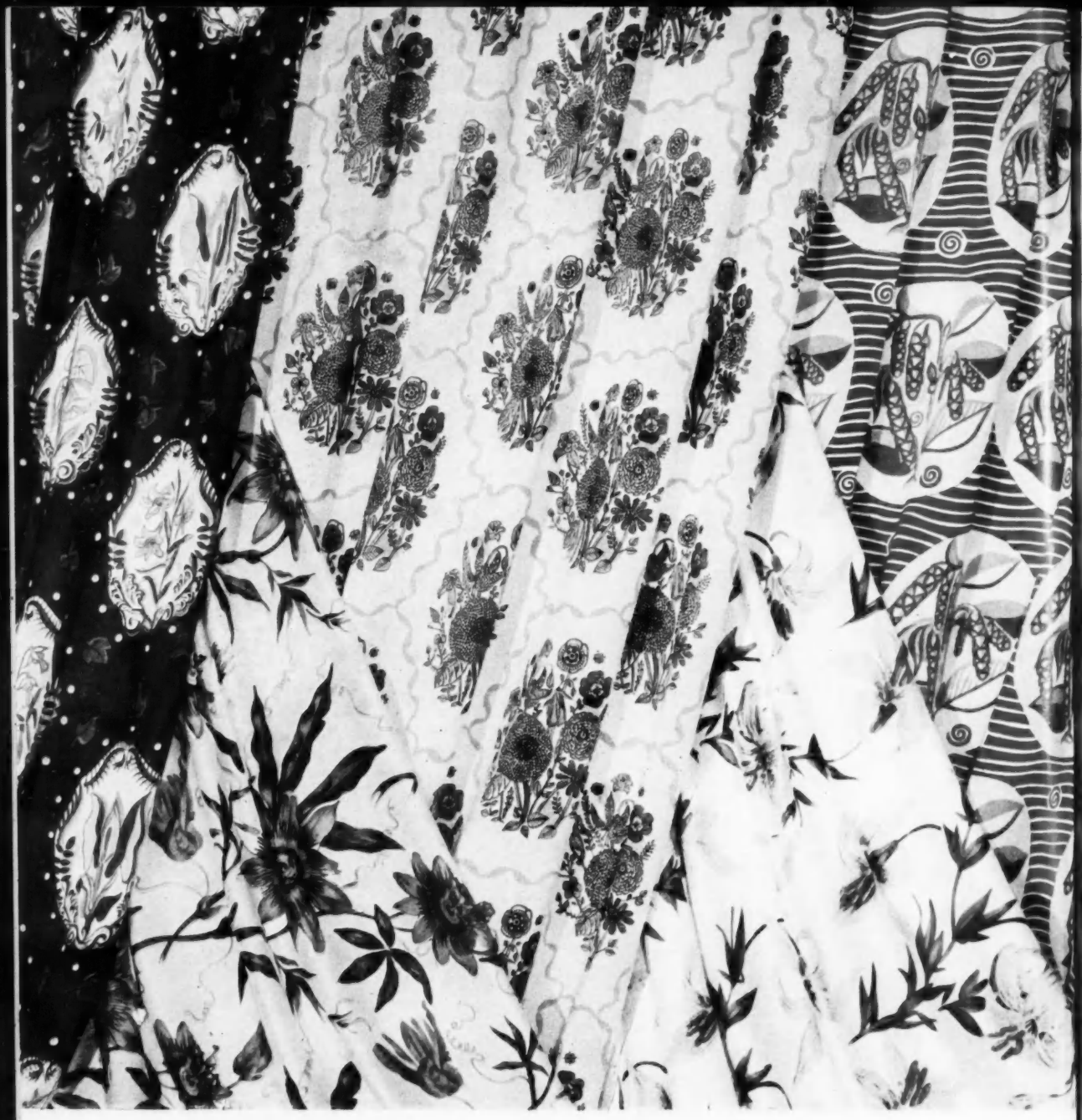
In 1933 this refrigerator by the Hotpoint Electric Appliance Co was the first hermetically sealed machine to be manufactured completely in England. The all-steel cabinet and the refrigerating system were well advanced technically but little thought had been given to the unity of the design.

The latest model of Coldrator Type CS70 seven cubic foot domestic refrigerator was also designed by the same company's engineering department but in collaboration with an outside industrial design consultant.

. . . The market for scientific instruments, however, became more discriminating on questions of form and finish, and it was decided to adopt a different approach. The crystallographic X-ray sets shown on right have won acceptance both on efficiency and appearance but further refinements are already under way.







NAPOLEON CALLED the English a nation of shopkeepers. We might with equal truth be called a nation of gardeners. The love of gardens and of flowers is in the Englishman's blood. Alma Faulkner, author of the following article, believes that this explains the abiding English love of floral patterns in design. Its abiding nature is evident when the historical examples which she illustrates are seen – as they should be seen – as the inevitable background to contemporary floral designs such as are illustrated on this page and page 18.

The fabrics above are (left to right): Chanson *designed by Marie Chant for Heal and Son Ltd, a John Barker design for David Whitehead Ltd,* Marigold *designed by Barbara Cox for Gayonnes Ltd, another Barker design for Whiteheads, and* Catkins *by Rosemary Ball for Heals.*

The English Tradition in

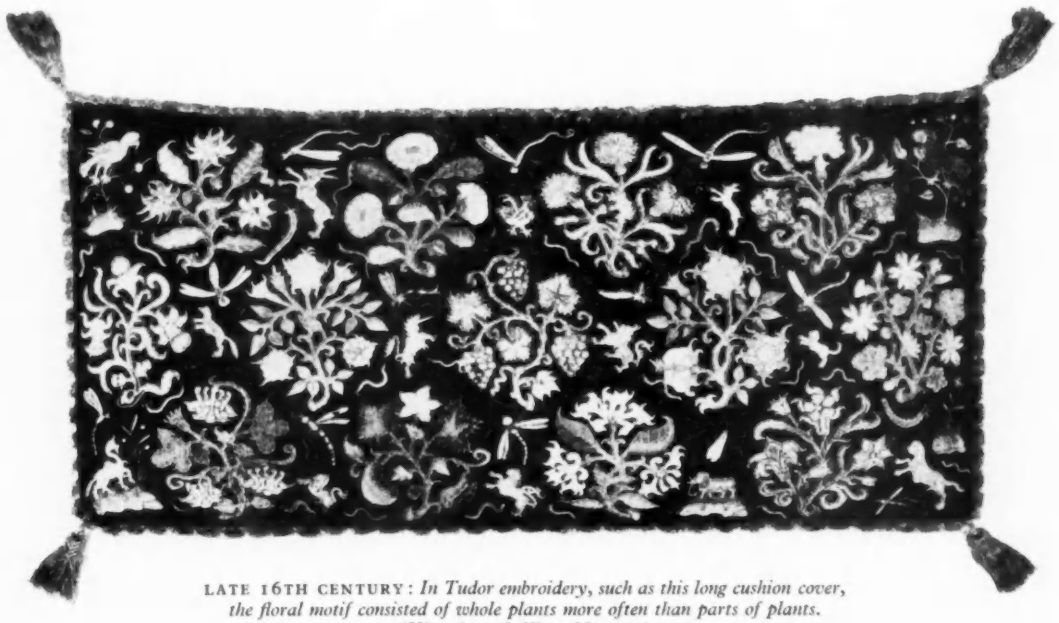
FLORAL DESIGN

BY ALMA FAULKNER

16th Century

BY THE TIME Elizabeth came to the throne, there existed a style of ornament in which the geometric structure was often more important than the floral detail, and the floral motif more often represented by a whole plant than by a part of it. The earlier Tudor embroideries show the motifs separate from one another; their arrangement is often reminiscent of formal church embroidery of the time.

The acanthus plant of Greece was in great favour because of the elegant curve of its leaf and the vigour of its growth, which provided a satisfactory starting-point for a floral design; but it was easy for such a motif to become debased, *i.e.*, too frequently imitated without knowledge of the original, leading to inaccuracy of drawing and lifeless appearance – something quite different from a deliberate departure from



LATE 16TH CENTURY: *In Tudor embroidery, such as this long cushion cover, the floral motif consisted of whole plants more often than parts of plants. (Victoria and Albert Museum.)*

known facts for what the artist deems a good and sufficient reason.

With the Tudors came an end of war between rival claimants to the throne, and greater domestic security. This resulted in greater comfort, an ardent cultivation of gardens, together with the production of herbals, and of books of flowers and birds drawn for the use of needlewomen. Elizabethan women who could afford the costly material of their craft embroidered, with the help of their servants, coverings for their furniture and their clothes, using wool, silk, and thread of gold or silver. They introduced coiling stems in rich all-over effects, with natural-looking flowers. Whether inspired by herbals, or drawn from observation, these Elizabethan embroideries displayed love and knowledge of plant form. Free and spontaneous, varied and unpretentious, but with an underlying sense of order, they did in fact exhibit many characteristics of an English garden.

17th Century

THE USE OF flowers in design had by the middle of this century become general. Stuart and Jacobean women had many uses for their work – bed-curtains were first in importance, and upholstered chairs were for the first time general in houses; domestic furniture was less roughly made than before, and a bold style of design, executed mainly in wool, appeared. The acanthus or some other plant of vigorous growth was often used as a starting-point of design; from a spiral stem grew natural-looking flowers and leaves. It was often used in the same design with conventional blossoms.

The work showed frequent use of different flowers on one stem. A possible explanation of this practice is that in a garden or hedgerow the various plants are not always seen separately or in their entirety, and that the confusion of nature is thus legitimately translated; it has also been suggested that the sprig seen in

LATE 16TH CENTURY: *Elizabethan needlewomen "introduced coiling stems in rich all-over effects, with natural-looking flowers." (V. and A. Museum.)*

LATE 17TH CENTURY: *In Stuart embroidery, a spiral stem from which grew naturalistic flowers and leaves was often combined with more conventional blossoms showing the influence of imported Persian carpets. (Bed curtain: V. and A. Museum.)*

many seventeenth-century embroideries came from the habit of cutting sprays and putting them into baskets. This must be conjecture; but the Stuart and Jacobean embroidresses had the herbals, published in increasing numbers, to inspire them, and must have known many plants at first hand through the cultivation of gardens and from medicinal use.

Although their designs might be influenced by gay India cottons recently imported, or by Persian carpets with rich floral patterns, they still maintained an English character, introducing the acanthus of Greece, the waving stems of the Indian cottons, or the exotic flowers of Persia, in company with flowers of their own countryside, all with great freedom of disposition.

The Civil War caused a dimming of enthusiasm for the floral motif, embroidered texts and religious subjects supplanting it. After the Restoration, the Renaissance or classical style held sway, and embroideries became more formal in design.

18th Century

IN THIS CENTURY the floral motif changed its character. The continuous spiral broke into sprays, bouquets, and flower-filled baskets; towards the end of the century, swags, garlands, trellis patterns and vertical lines adorned with flowers all enriched the fabrics (and now the wallpapers) of the English home.

French silk weavers who had settled in England produced work displaying the gaiety and sophistication of their race, and influenced our native weavers. Indeed, French influence was strong: furniture from France was frequently imported. English furniture grew more refined in character, in keeping – as were the fabrics – with the English house, which in this century reached its greatest height of elegance in the classical manner.

In the early part of the century, trade in Chinese silk resulted in the use of Chinese motifs in furniture and fabrics for a brief period; and at the end of the century there appeared on the general market gay cotton prints inspired by the Indians' painted cottons. In embroidery, silk was used more than wool, and resulted in a greater delicacy and refinement of technique. Flowers and leaves became skilfully shaded, to make them appear more life-like.

What of the English garden? The rough parkland surrounding the earlier mansion, with its herb and flower garden, was replaced by grounds laid out formally, with temples, statues, urns, and balustrading, disposed on various well-calculated levels. Later, there came the landscape garden – this country's one outstanding contribution to garden design – which replaced formality by a studied informality. The art of the landscape gardener was to conceal art.

In cottage gardens, too, flowers still bloomed in profusion. But, all around the embroidresses, there were now so many other things to copy. Experts among them, using coloured wools and black silk, imitated with uncanny skill the texture of paintings in oil and of engravings, often knowing nothing of their subjects or of the quality of their design or execution. Their cleverness was admired by the ignorant; but these descendants of Tudor and Jacobean craftswomen had plunged from a sunny era of floral pattern into the deep shade of uncomprehending imitation.

EARLY 18TH CENTURY: *"The floral motif changed its character. The continuous spiral broke into sprays" – as in this embroidered coverlet, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum.*

EARLY 19TH CENTURY: *Cotton fabric, block-printed with a multi-colour design: a reminder that at the beginning of the century fabrics of taste and charm were still being designed and made. (V. and A. Museum.) The hackneyed, overcrowded patterns which we regard as typical of Victorian design had not yet arrived on the scene.*

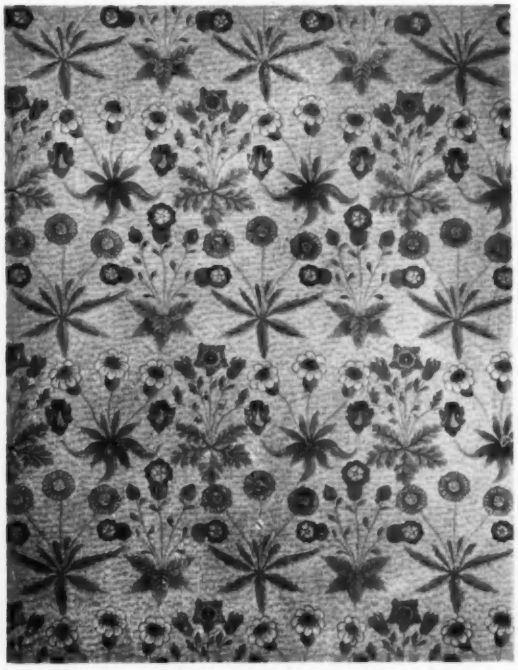
C. 1860: *An overcrowded pattern of meaningless lines and flowers lacking life and charm, embossed on a book cover. Crowding was equally evident in the textiles and wallpapers of the period.*

19th Century

NOT ALL eighteenth-century pattern fell into the decay just described. The beginning of the nineteenth century still saw fabrics of taste and charm; but the underlying sense of order was diminishing, the direct contact with nature was being lost, and the spontaneous vigour of English design declining into repetition and imitation.

With the rise of the machine, wealth came suddenly to many who had never known it. Whereas formerly those who could afford comfort had been informed in taste (and often could themselves produce original and lively work), by the middle of the century the designer and the man who executed the design were two different people who did not understand each other's trade. The factories could turn out fabrics designed by people who displayed no love or observation of nature, no understanding of order or balance.

Towards the end of the century a new spirit came into textile and wallpaper design – the crusading spirit



LATE 19TH CENTURY: *With the crusading spirit of William Morris, new life came into floral design. Patterns like his* Daisy *wallpaper, above, "stood out by reason of their lucidity, vigour and grace."*

of William Morris. Though he tried to keep alive hand-work, and so had little immediate effect on design in industry generally, his work was of greater importance than is sometimes recognised. Among the majority of overcrowded and often disorderly floral patterns, designs like his *Daisy* wallpaper stood out by reason of their lucidity, vigour and grace. If his later patterns were too heavy for the lighter furnishings of the end of the century, his life's work inspired many later designers who, unlike Morris himself, accepted the machine and worked for it, recognising in Morris a link in a chain which without him might have snapped.

20th Century

THE EDWARDIAN PERIOD saw the building of many small houses and, in London especially, of flats demanding furnishing on a smaller scale and in a lighter key than before. Dwellers in the larger houses, too, wanted furniture and fabrics less cumbersome and gloomy than those of the Victorian age. To meet their demands, reproductions of Jacobean furniture were made in quantity, while the rich and comfortable patterns of Jacobean embroidery appeared in fabrics, often in garbled forms resulting from ignorant imitation.

Yet the need was felt for lighter material and pattern, and in the early years of the century Charles Voysey designed furniture, wallpapers, and fabric displaying an understanding of it. In his work, floral motifs appeared with a delicate and spring-like quality. Libertys, too, took up the challenge, and their fabrics, though produced at a time when neither satisfying order nor drawing based on knowledge of natural forms was general, delighted many by their lightness and freshness.

During the first World War, a group of artists, inspired by work of the past decade in Germany, began to produce fabrics in which once more the geometric structure was of more importance than the floral detail. Theirs was lively, fresh, exploratory and conscientious work; it combined awareness of beauty

EARLY 20TH CENTURY: *A demand for lighter patterns was anticipated by such printed fabrics as this, by the architect-designer C. F. A. Voysey. (Photograph reproduced by courtesy of Professor Nikolaus Pevsner.)*

1900–1910: *Liberty's, the Regent Street store, took up the challenge of the new century and achieved a reputation for informal designs in clear, simple colours. On the Continent as well as at home, the* style Liberty *is still remembered.*

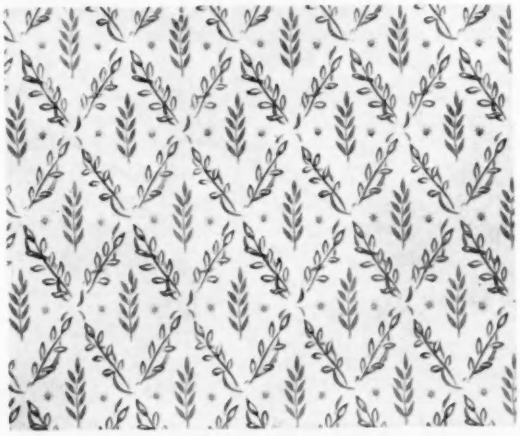
CONTEMPORARY FLORAL PATTERNS *in wallpapers and textiles. Top to bottom:*

Two papers from Wall Paper Manufacturers Ltd, designed by Margaret Simeon; C 563 *price* 5s 3d *per piece including tax; C* 555, 4s 1d (*see "Wallpaper Book" p.* 34).

Fabric designed by John Farleigh for D. Whitehead Ltd, SP 98, 50 *inches wide, approximate price* 29s *per yard.*

Amberley 50-*inch print by Story and Co (Wholesale) Ltd, designer Mrs L. Rice, approximate price* 27s 6d *per yard.*

On front cover, L'Epoque by Gayonnes, designer Mary Harper, 50 *inches wide, approximate price* 16s 6d *per yard.*



with practical consideration of the needs of an overcrowded, highly industrialised community.

The floral motif is today threatened from two directions. Young designers are seeking refuge in abstraction, and tend to shun the floral motif, possibly because it derives from a sentiment which they do not find suited to the expression of life as it appears to them today (though they may, in secret, share it). Again, the increasing cost of production is apparently causing the reprinting of a number of outworn, and often bad, designs in order to satisfy a demand for floral pattern, which is still strong.

But there is a better side to the picture. There are still some designers who seek to interpret floral themes in a modern way, and there are some manufacturers – more, probably, than there were a few years ago – who encourage them to do so, whether they work in printed fabrics or in wallpapers. Again, there may be a new interest in floral patterns for embroidery. There is little time for hand embroidery today, but some designers have discovered what a lively mind may produce with floral motifs on a sewing-machine.

Meanwhile, the flowers bloom unconcerned in English gardens, and the rose is still our country's emblem.

"An ardent cultivation of gardens." Tudor gardening scene from a Herbal *of 1588. Reproduced from* Medieval Gardens *by Sir Frank Crisp (John Lane, The Bodley Head).*

Better facilities for printing-design students?

"CONSIDERABLY MORE THAN half of the total number of designers supplied by local art colleges and schools . . . to advertising and commercial studios and similar occupations in 1950 had had little systematic contact with technical or industrial processes. This situation calls for early investigation by the authorities concerned."

The comment is from a report on *The Training of Designers for the Printing Industry* which has been prepared by the London and Home Counties Regional Advisory Council for Higher Technological Education; or, strictly speaking, by a sub-committee of the printing and kindred trades committee of this body. Its chairman was Percy Astins, CBE, JP, of the Printing Machine Managers' Trade Society; the members included Jesse Collins, Ashley Havinden, and representatives of printing, publishing and education.

The report recognises the fact that designers for printing are drawn from two different sources, one represented by the design student "who during his course of training decides to aim at work in printing, publishing or advertising," the other by the printing-trade craftsman "who has potentialities as a designer." The sub-committee points out that industry cannot afford to neglect either of these sources if the standard of design in British printing "is to be improved or even maintained at its present level." It discusses means whereby the design student can, in the latter part of his course, learn more about printing and process techniques than he is likely to do at present, and the printing craftsman can train more completely to become a practising designer.

Space here is too limited to quote the sub-committee's detailed recommendations for the contents of three types of course – a general (intermediate) course for full-time students, and two final (National Diploma in Design) courses, one for full-time students and the other for printing craftsmen: the recommendations occupy four pages of the report (copies of which can be obtained, price 1*s*, from the Regional Advisory Council, Tavistock House South, Tavistock Square, WC1). But, as every industry uses print and the effects of any design-training policy for the printing industry are likely to be noticed in industry generally, the principal recommendations of the sub-committee deserve to be quoted *verbatim*. They are as follows:

1: *Courses for the training of designers for the printing industry should be held in, or in association with, colleges containing reasonably comprehensive departments of printing.*

The desirability of such close association is implicit in our opening paragraph. The report considers that the need for it "has not been sufficiently recognised in the past." There is statistical evidence to support this view: an analysis of students who left London and Home Counties art schools in the summer of 1950, after full-time training, shows that nearly 300 found jobs as advertisement designers, commercial artists or fashion artists; but, out of the 39 art colleges and schools which turned them out into the world, only 15 had industrial printing classes of their own, and only 12 had anything in the nature of a comprehensive printing department.

2: *In allocating practical accommodation to classes in colleges, priority should be given to classes for apprentices under the indenture approved by the Joint Industrial Council.*

continued on page 34

"The vital importance of training in precision lettering and typography should be impressed on students." Cover and inside pages of the Chelsea Flower Show catalogue were redesigned last year. Printers, both before and after, Staples Press Ltd.

BETTER AIRPORT COACHES FOR B·O·A·C

Many overseas visitors gain their first impression of the standard of design in Britain from the air-lines' road vehicles. Fortunately BOAC recognises the importance of appearance as well as comfort in its fleet of coaches.

BOAC was a war-baby. The means of making travel more civilised, comfortable and agreeable were lacking when British Overseas Airways Corporation came into being. Because airports are invariably some distance from the cities they serve, airport coaches are second in importance only to the air liners themselves among the services of a passenger air-line. BOAC's first road vehicles, like its first aircraft, were military designs, adapted with varying degrees of success to civil use. At some overseas stations, troop-carrying lorries were used (1); at home, a higher degree of comfort was achieved with second-hand motor-coaches (2). These, however, had the disadvantage of very limited luggage-space – besides such modish trimmings as a drooping waistline and an excess of mouldings on the side of the body.

The Corporation was already aiming at better things; a manifesto published in 1946 for the exhibition, *Design and the Modern Air-Line*, announced:

> "When British Overseas Airways began, some eighteen months ago, to make active preparations for peace-time operations, it was determined that the Corporation should aim at achieving an outstanding reputation . . . in all matters in which good taste and artistic merit might be involved."

This praiseworthy intention was put into effect in the Corporation's first fleet of *new* coaches. These were of a design (3) which was supplied in some numbers to BOAC, the RAF Transport Command, and other users. To give more luggage-space, their designers adopted a layout which had been used in some of the long-distance coaches of the early 1930's – the "one-and-a-half decker," with several rows of seats raised, and a large luggage compartment underneath them. Many of these coaches are in service today, and very handsome they still look, in the Corporation's standard colour-scheme of blue and white (much *more* handsome, one can add, than other operators' coaches of similar design in different colour-schemes). Their type of seating arrangement has, however, been abandoned because it unduly limits the number of seats that can be provided; these vehicles carried 18 passengers only, and the increasing size of modern air liners has made coaches of this size increasingly inadequate.

At a later date, when more coaches were ordered, a feeling of exuberance appears to have temporarily shaken the Corporation's determination expressed in the words quoted above; a number of new vehicles were put into service complete with that Aunt Sally of design critics, the dorsal fin. This feature may be slightly more justifiable in an air-line's coaches than in anyone else's; it may, however, suggest that there has been some confusion between design for ground transport and the design of the aircraft which the vehicles are intended to serve. At least one coach of this period (4) had, in addition to the fin, a generous garnish of chromium "speed lines."

1: *Bare essentials: one of the tropical passenger-carrying vehicles used by BOAC during the war years.*

2: *Wartime purchase: a second-hand coach with accommodation for* 28 *passengers – and very little luggage. Note the applied "streamlining" in the form of beading on the side panels.*

3: *Designed for the job: coach with adequate luggage-room below the raised seats but space for only* 18 *passengers.* (1945–6: *body by Park Royal Coachworks; decorative scheme by Richard Lonsdale-Hands Associates.*)

4: *Long-distance coach for service between London and the Southampton flying-boat base* (1948). *In this type and others built soon afterwards, the rear fin and the trimmings suggested tourist coach design rather than former BOAC practice.*

5: *Dignified simplicity in the latest airport coach, which is air-conditioned and carries* 29 *passengers with adequate luggage accommodation.* (*Body, as in* 4, *by Thomas Harrington Ltd; chassis, as in* 3 *and* 4, *by Commer.*)

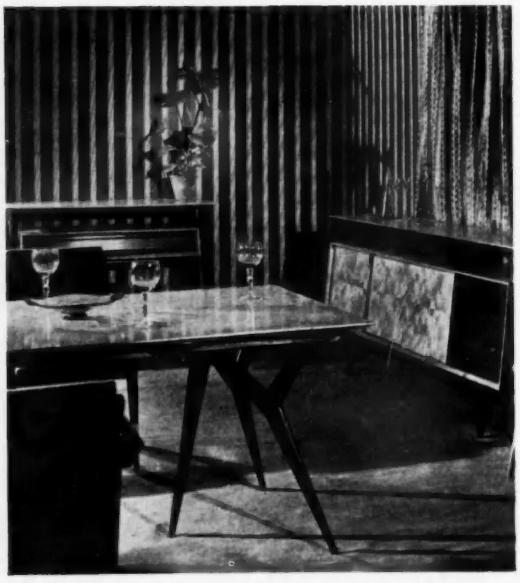
Fortunately, the story does not end there. The newest BOAC coaches (5) avoid all the quirks of appearance-design which were criticised in the intermediate stages – a fact which, in these circumstances, is even more encouraging than if progress had been smooth and continuous. The lines of the current coachwork are horizontal – not drooping; the side panels are impressively free from chromium trim; the rear end is unbroken by excrescences added in the name of streamlining. (The ventilation system, formerly housed in the fin, has been re-housed elsewhere.) In case these seem negative virtues, it can be added that the new coaches carry 29 passengers, with accommodation for 30 kilograms (66 lb) of luggage each, in an air-conditioned interior which looks as if it had been designed from the outset for world travellers, not for Margate or Blackpool trip traffic.

ALEC DAVIS

This close-up view of the tail of coach 5 *shows how much has been gained by the omission of the dorsal fin, shiny metal "speed lines" and other trimmings of* 4. *The front end – with Speedbirds on the radiator grille – is less successful; but the general tidying-up makes this coach a marked improvement on the previous model.*

Furniture for today and tomorrow

ALL THE FURNITURE shown here is English, and with one exception it is all new. The exception (the bureau on facing page) comes from a range whose success is established, Story's *Hepple* furniture, now in its fourth year. It is a modification of an earlier design in this range: the recent raising of the manufacturer's permitted maximum cost price has made improvements possible. The "success story" of Story's tax-free contemporary furniture was told by Ian Henderson, MSIA, the firm's Director of Design, at the 1951 Design Congress (summarised in DESIGN, November 1951, page 32).



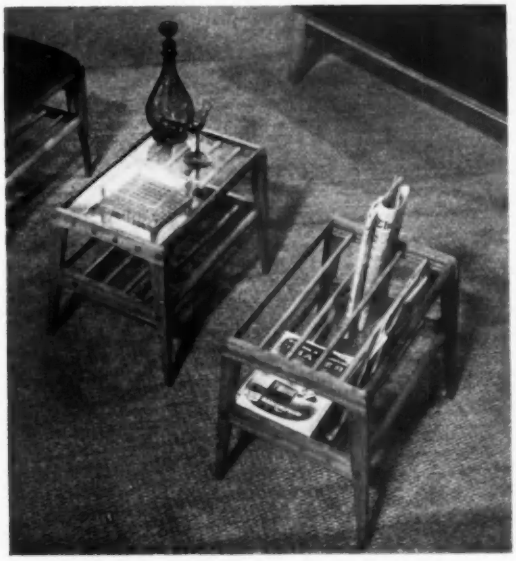
Above: New Heal furniture which seems to pay more attention to fashionable foibles than to the Heal tradition of designing for lasting use. This is contemporary furniture on the grand scale: the table, with leaves, extends to 7 ft 4 in; the sideboard is 6 ft 3 in wide; their prices are £100 and £136 10s respectively. Designed by Christopher Heal, MSIA; hand-made in figured pine and walnut.

Stocked by Brown, Muff's of Bradford and Bainbridges of Newcastle, the table below was designed by Kenneth Brayshaw, MSIA, of Harrogate. It is being made in small quantities by a local craftsman, Leslie Kitching; the possibility of machine production at a later date was borne in mind when it was designed. The top is of plywood, veneered with Nigerian walnut and edged with lime or sycamore; the underframe is of walnut.

Right: Student work from the Beckenham School of Art – brass handles in a shape which at least has originality in its favour. They are fitted to a mahogany bedside cabinet which was shown in the art schools' exhibit at the recent Furniture Exhibition. A pictorial postscript to DESIGN*'s recent article and correspondence about the design of handles.*

This cane furniture, designed by Charles Kenrick, was first used on an exhibition stand of his design for the Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China. It has since been introduced into a number of Jaeger shops. It is made by G. W. Scott and Sons Ltd; in the small quantities in which it has been produced, the prices work out at £8 15s for the magazine table, with plastic top, and at £7 15s 10d for a chair, plus the cost of 1¾ yards of material.

Above, right: The bureau from Story's Hepple II *range, incorporating detail improvements. Dowel-ends make a slight decorative pattern on the legs.*



Right: Some time ago, Victor Taylor, MSIA, *of Ace Radio Ltd – who has designed many cabinets for the firm's radiograms – designed a small occasional table, primarily for use in the firm's showroom. The design has now been taken up for quantity production by Heal's. The glass shelf can either be used as a tabletop or placed on the lower set of dowels, enabling the table to be used as a newspaper rack. The price is £2 13s 6d.*

New settings for selling men's wear

Is it too fanciful to see a connection between the development of self-service in food stores and the design of the latest Austin Reed shops? Though the customer cannot serve himself with men's wear, in these shops the obstruction between him and the open displays of stock is reduced almost to a minimum.

PICTURES ON this page and page 27 illustrate, in two new Austin Reed shops at East Street, Brighton, and the Promenade, Cheltenham

1: the trend towards more open planning, mentioned above;
2: the use of standard products from various equipment manufacturers in conjunction with other fittings designed by the company's architects (Westwood Sons and Harrison).

The two photographs on left show an Austin Reed shop in the Strand, opened in 1913, and, below it, the shirt and pyjama department in the new Brighton branch. Here practically all the stock is accessible and visible, its colours standing out vividly against the natural wood finish of the fittings (which are mostly of walnut, with sycamore for the lining of such features as the display recess, centre right in this photograph). Beneath the open-fronted trays, there are stock drawers on which the cast metal drawer-pull is ingeniously combined with a size-card holder: see illustration on front cover. This is made by Yannedis and Co Ltd, London WC1, to Austin Reed's design.

At night and while the shop is being cleaned, the open fixtures are covered by roller shutters in some cases and roller blinds in others. These roll out of sight when not in use.

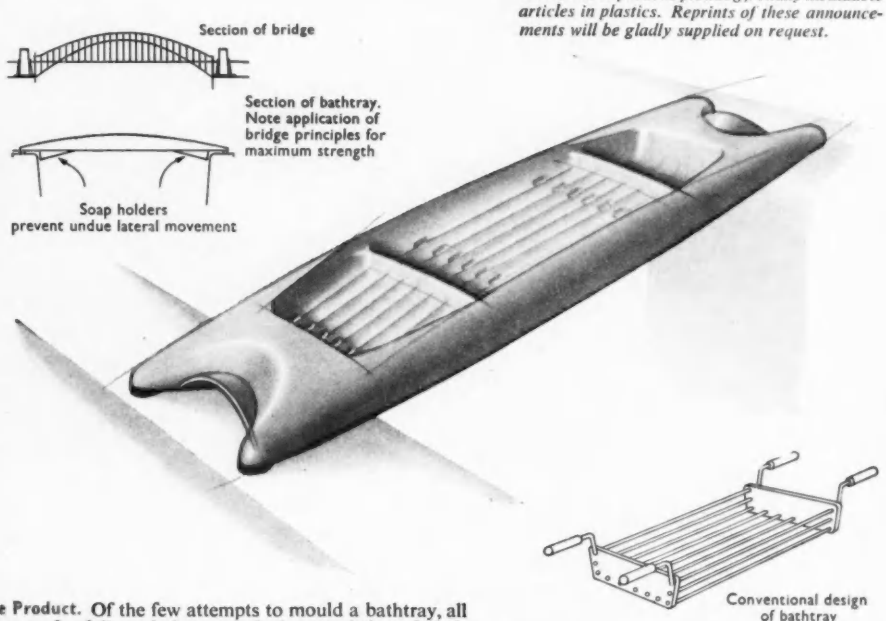
It is not certain that such open display of relatively valuable stock would be practicable in larger or smokier towns than Brighton and Cheltenham; but, on the basis of experience there, Austin Reed's are optimistic.

continued on page 27

HUGHES 61
BRITISH ALUMINIUM
RIGIDAL ALUMINIUM CORRUGATED SHEET
FOR TROPICAL ROOFING

Designer's Diary N.º 4

In this series the B.I.P. Product Design Unit seeks to illustrate how technical requirements can be met to produce pleasing, readily mouldable articles in plastics. Reprints of these announcements will be gladly supplied on request.


Section of bridge
Section of bathtray. Note application of bridge principles for maximum strength
Soap holders prevent undue lateral movement

Conventional design of bathtray

The Product. Of the few attempts to mould a bathtray, all have so far followed the general characteristics of their wooden and metal predecessors. Two basic faults are the tendencies of such trays to slide about and fall into the bath; and their seat-like structure which, whilst inviting such use, does not make for great strength when reproduced in plastics. This new conception of a bathtray primarily aims to overcome these faults.

The Design. In contrast to traditional design, note first the strong *bridge-like* structure of this bathtray. For additional strength vertical divisions are incorporated between compartments and on what would otherwise be flat surfaces are moulded internal ribs and drain-channels. To locate and anchor the tray, two novel features are incorporated. The deep soap compartments (see diagram) provide a location to prevent undue lateral movement, whilst four small rubber suction pads on the underside prevent the bathtray slipping. An unobtrusive lifting handle at each end provides a fingerhold for lifting against suction. This bathtray represents a simple compression job for straightforward up-and-down moulding.

The Material. Beetle urea moulding powder is recommended because it provides a wide colour range complementary to contemporary bathroom colour schemes. Although there will be some expansion and contraction due to changes of temperature and humidity, dimensional considerations are not critical in this application. Urea material is, therefore, the most economical to use for the job.

The B.I.P. Technical Advisory Service will assist industrial designers and manufacturers who use plastics mouldings in their production processes. Advice is freely offered regarding product styling, mould design, choice of materials and moulding techniques. The Service exists primarily to assist your own designers and technicians regarding those problems peculiar to plastics mouldings, with which only a specialist can be completely conversant.

BRITISH INDUSTRIAL PLASTICS LIMITED, B·I·P GROUP **1 ARGYLL ST., LONDON, W.1**

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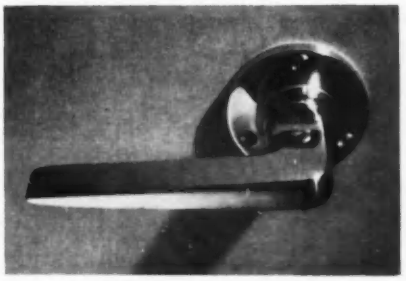
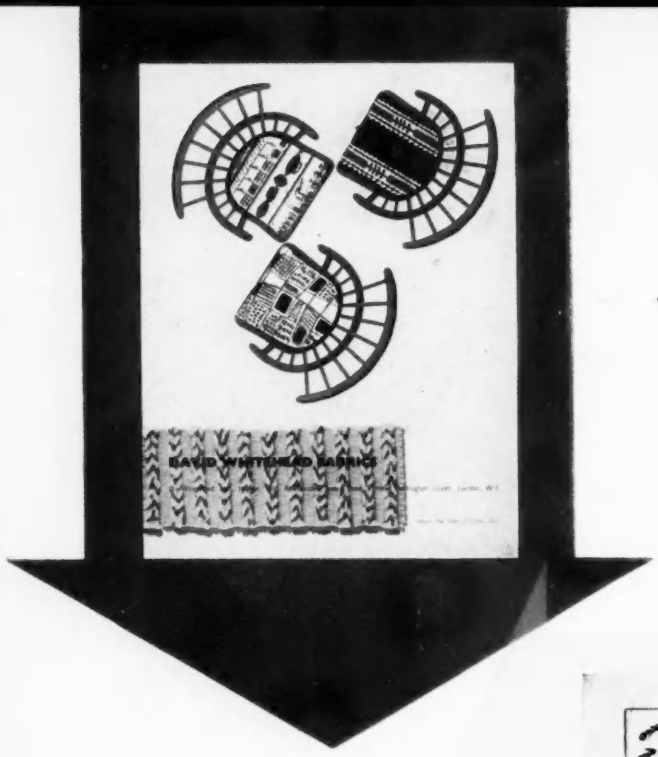
Below: This transparent display unit for ties is now used on counters and tables in many Austin Reed shops. Designed and made by H. C. Slatford of West Ewell, it is formed from a single piece of Perspex sheet, which is shaped round blocks.

First-floor showroom of the Cheltenham shop. Here and at Brighton, the traditional long rows of counters have been replaced in some departments by single 6-foot counters, and in others by tables of the type seen above, designed by the architects. Plans of the Brighton shop were published in The Architects' Journal, *14 February 1952. Shopfitters at Brighton and Cheltenham, Harris and Sheldon Ltd.*

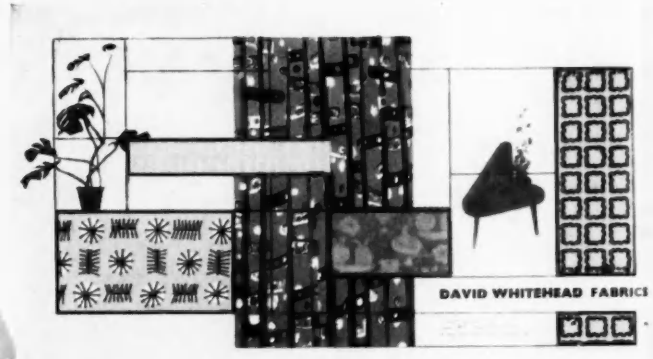
Above: A fitting which, like others in the Brighton shop, serves two purposes: to display merchandise, and to hide structural members of an old building which was adapted, at a cost within strict licence limits, to form a modern shop. To keep the sticks and umbrellas in place, there are shallow recesses in the lower shelf, corresponding in position to the holes in the upper one.

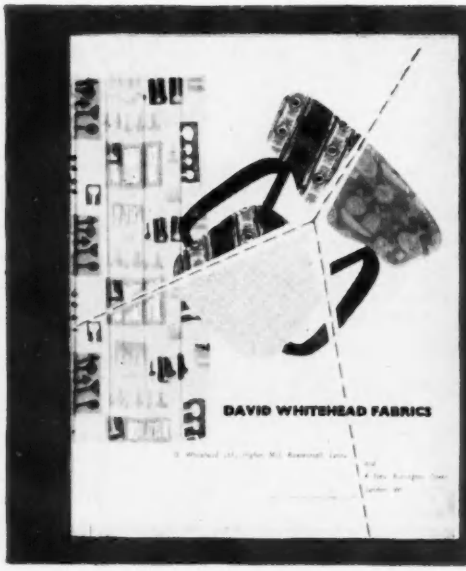
Below: this handle by Yannedis is one of several well-designed standard products specified for the latest Austin Reed shops. (Others – large and small – include Thermovent heaters and Parker ashtrays, both recognisable in the photograph on left.)





.....just to remind you about





DAVID WHITEHEAD FABRICS

D. Whitehead Ltd. Higher Mill
Rawtenstall, Lancs.
and 4 New Burlington Street
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One of the David Whitehead Group

Mediterranean climate

GIO PONTI, *architect and Editor of* Domus, *designed the new furniture of the Casino at San Remo. Here Italian contemporary design lets its back hair down. The chairs owe something of their shape to Scandinavia, but the playing-card decoration could scarcely have happened except on the Mediterranean.*

A CROWDED lunch-hour meeting of the Design and Industries Association in London on 25 March heard a first-hand account of the design movement in Italy from Ernesto Rogers, former Editor of *Domus* and now a member of the BBPR architectural partnership. Mr Rogers made it clear that the Italian architect-designers work closely with craftsman, but that there is not the same liaison between industrial designers and large-scale industry as in the United States or even the United Kingdom.

The Italian car industry, as Mr Rogers pointed out, has a high standard of design, but this has been achieved from within the industry, not through liaison with outside designers like the architects who have co-operated with Olivetti technicians in the firm's typewriter designs. In this respect Olivetti is exceptional.

An exhibition of photographs of Italian contemporary architecture has just closed at the RIBA and is about to visit various provincial centres. Though it shows the predominance of interior design and furniture design in the industrial-design activities of Italian architects, it also includes a few examples of their work in other fields – notably an electric clock designed by BBPR for mass production, with moving figures instead of moving hands; a cast metal handle, also for mass production, by Angelo Mangiarotti; railway carriage interiors by Renzo Zavanella; and a *Phonola* wireless set of 1939 in a moulded plastic cabinet which still looks modern (though it also looks rather like a weighing-machine).

CHARIOT OF FIRE *is the Italians' name for this vehicle, designed to tour the country advertising compressed bottled gas. The bodywork is mostly of safety-glass, Plexiglas and aluminium. To convert the bus into an exhibition stand when stationary (right), the top panels swing up to form canopies, the lower panels down to form gangways.*
Designers, Franco Campo and Carlo Graffi, architects, Turin.
Coachwork by F.lli Macchi, Varese, on Lancia chassis. Client, Liquigas.

'More than meets the eye'

Case-history of the design of a wall lighting fitting, intended primarily for use in the cabins of ocean liners but suitable also for the domestic market

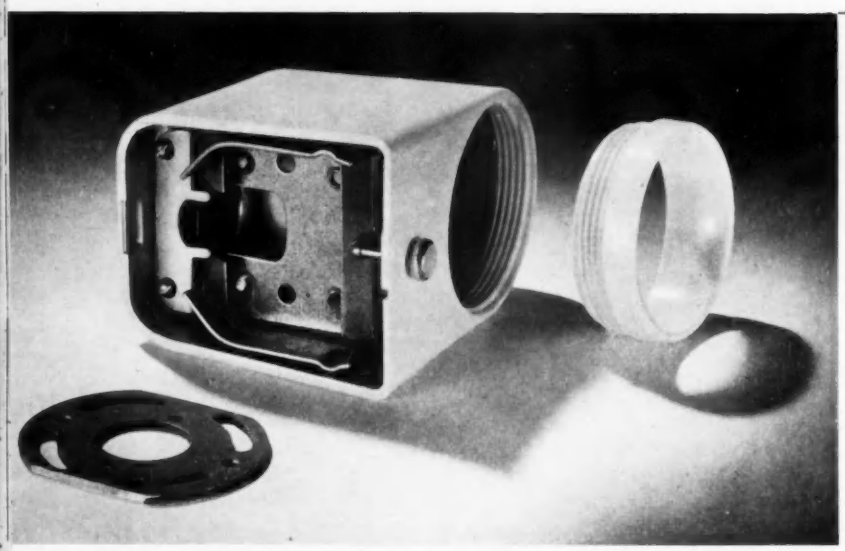
by L. E. A. Phillips, MSIA *(Manager and Chief Designer, Fittings Design Office, General Electric Co Ltd)*

ALTHOUGH A PRODUCT may conform to accepted standards of contemporary design in external appearance, it does not always follow that it is of sound design throughout. This is the case history of a special-purpose lighting fitting in which consideration has been given to all aspects of design.

The fitting is a wall light, made in metal and plastic and designed primarily for the lighting of cabins in ocean liners. At the same time, features have been incorporated to make it suitable for the domestic market.

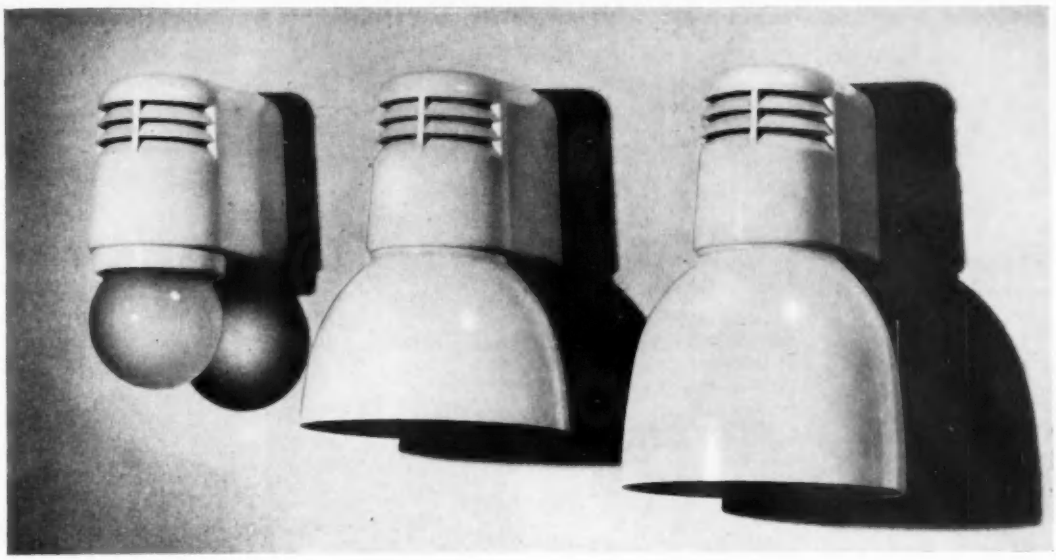
It can be used to perform three separate lighting functions: first, as an alleyway or vestibule light, where a shield or shade is unnecessary; second, as a berthlight or bedlight; third, as a general cabin illumination fitting. The same bonnet or cowl is common to all three functions. It accommodates a translucent shade in one of two sizes, or a simple ring; all of these screw separately into it.

With small semi-portable and domestic-type marine fixtures such as this, it is desirable for the essential working parts to be separate, so that they can be installed during the progress of building and all wiring



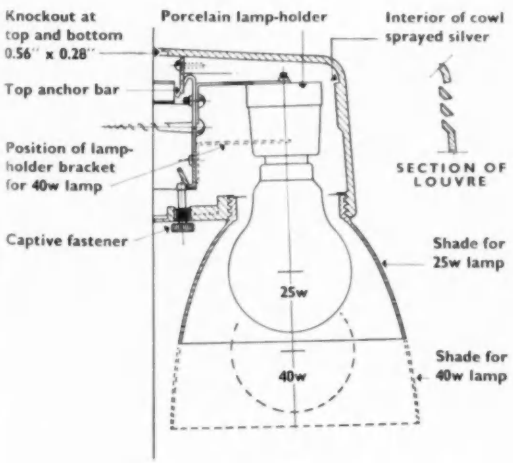
This view of the bonnet from the back shows the captive screw which draws it into vertical position (when the metal plate is attached to a wall or bulkhead) by bearing against the sloping surface at the base of the metal fixing plate. The flat metal plate seen in foreground is an addition to enable the fitting to be used with domestic conduit wiring systems.

Right, section through the fitting. It shows the different positions occupied by 25 watt and 40 watt lamps, used with different sizes of shade.



Three versions of the same lighting fitting; without shade, for use as an alley or vestibule light: with small shade, as a berthlight or bedlight: with deeper shade (and larger bulb) for general cabin illumination.

connections can be made and tested. This practice enables the outer shell, consisting of the more "eyeable" parts, to be fitted just prior to the completion of the vessel, thus minimising the risk of pilferage (which is by no means negligible during fitting-out). It also helps to reduce breakage, and avoids soiling by paint or dirty hands.



In reverse, the entire outer shell can be easily removed for thorough cleaning, thereby obviating the marking of wall surfaces.

In the fitting under review, these objectives are achieved by the use of a simple press-formed metal plate so designed that it is simple to fix and wire; it locates the bonnet positively in a vertical position; and it permits the bonnet to be quickly fastened with a single captive screw – the action of turning the captive screw draws the bonnet firmly to wall or bulkhead, as the tip of the screw bears against a tapered surface. The lampholder bracket can be mounted in two positions, one for use with the bedlight shade or the ring (using a 25-watt lamp), the other for the general-illumination shade (using a 40-watt lamp).

By the use of an additional stamped metal plate, the fitting is readily adaptable for use with the normal conduit wiring systems ashore. There are no unsightly visible fixing screws. The bonnet has knockout portions at top and bottom which can easily be tapped out to accommodate the surface wiring which is usual on shipboard. It incorporates a louvred opening for ventilation; this is desirable in most fittings of this kind to avoid raising the temperature of wiring connections and the lamp-cap beyond safe limits.

It is hoped these notes will have shown that the fitting, though outwardly simple in appearance, has "more in it than meets the eye."

Design NEWS SECTION

COMPETITIONS

British designer wins coveted US award

A printed curtain fabric designed by Lucienne Day, ARCA, FSIA, and made by Heal's Wholesale and Export Ltd, has been judged by the American Institute of Decorators as the best design of the year on the American market. This is the first time that Britain has carried off this highly competitive American award. Mrs Day went to New York in March to receive her "Citation of Merit."

The fabric (illustrated below with its designer) is called *Calyx*, and the design is based on plant life although its forms are abstract. It is screen-printed on 48-inch wide linen and has an unusually large repeat – 27 inches by 24 inches wide – which makes it particularly good for large rooms and for exhibitions. It needs a drop of at least two and a half yards to obtain the best effect. Since Heals took it up, the American wholesale house of Greeff Fabrics Inc has sold *Calyx* to over 200 American interior decorators. The British retail price is 28*s* 5*d* a yard.

Lucienne Day is the wife of Robin Day, who won first prize in an American furniture design competition three years ago (DESIGN, No 2, p. 24).

The fabric was originally designed to be shown with his furniture in the Festival of Britain and in the Milan Triennale.

After studying at the Royal College of Art, Mrs Day obtained her diploma in 1940. She later taught at the Beckenham Art School, at the same time selling designs to leading textile manufacturers. The Victoria and Albert Museum bought one of the first designs she sold, while still a student. She gave up teaching in 1946 to concentrate on private practice. She was the first honorary secretary of the Society of Industrial Artists Textile Group, which she helped to form in 1946 and with which she is still closely associated.

Scottish craftsmanship

First prize of £70 in a competition for hand-made furniture by Scottish craftsmen, organised by the Council of Industrial Design Scottish Committee, has been won by George M. H. Richardson, who entered a bow-fronted sideboard in Australian blackbean and English cherry with sliding tambour front.

Second-class awards went to Elizabeth C. McCaig for a tea trolley in Honduras mahogany and Formica and a lady's workbox in rosewood and Honduras mahogany, and to J. Connel Pringle for a mahogany fireside cabinet and mahogany and walnut coffee tables.

RSA bursaries for 1952

The report on the 1951 Industrial Art Bursaries Competition held by the Royal Society of Arts has been published in a pamphlet together with particulars of the 1952 competition. The pamphlet includes illustrations of entries in most sections.

The 1952 competition will include the same sections as last year. Sixteen bursaries, amounting to a value of £2,325, are being offered. In 1951 awards totalled £1,750.

The pamphlet, which is free, may be obtained from the Secretary of the Royal Society of Arts, John Adam Street, Adelphi, London WC2.

Lucienne Day with her winning curtain fabric, Calyx.

EXHIBITIONS

BoT recommendations

Recommendations on design policy for exhibitions overseas have been made by the Board of Trade Exhibitions Advisory Committee, following the lines of a 1949 memorandum from the FBI Industrial Art Committee, which was concerned with the low standard of design of British displays and information stands.

Broadly, it is recommended that wherever possible qualified architects and display designers should be employed and advice sought from appropriate authorities such as the Council of Industrial Design.

"Good design" labels in the USA

The "Good Design" exhibitions sponsored jointly by the Merchandise Mart, Chicago, and the Museum of Modern Art, New York, have now reached their third year under the direction of Edgar Kaufmann, Junior. Since the first of these exhibitions was reviewed in DESIGN (May 1950), one of the most interesting innovations has been the introduction of a label worded "Good Design" which may be attached by manufacturers to products represented in the exhibitions.

The progress of this attempt to give cash value to the good design (in the selectors' opinion) will be watched with interest on both sides of the Atlantic. It has received some publicity in advertisements in the more design-minded American magazines such as *Interiors*.

The salad bowl and servers illustrated on our front cover this month are from the new exhibits included in the "Good Design" exhibition in January.

They were designed by William F. Stromberg and made by Ceramic Studio.

NEW PRODUCTS

Design for display

A new range of display fittings called *Daedal* has been introduced by E. Pollard and Co Ltd, London EC1. The shapes are abstract and they have an unconventional appearance. Both wood and metal are used in their construction, and the finish is a stone-like texture in neutral shades such as terra-cotta, slate grey and moss. Papier mâché is used for some fittings. The fittings enable goods to be displayed in a variety of ways, and can be altered or adapted to meet individual requirements.

One of the new Daedal *fittings.*

Commemorative goblets

To commemorate last year's royal visit to Canada and the United States, James Powell and Sons (Whitefriars) Ltd have produced 60 crystal glass goblets decorated with an inscription by the rare diamond-engraving process. They are planned as collectors' pieces and were designed and engraved by W. J. Wilson, MSIA, general manager and table glassware designer of Whitefriars.

The diamond-engraving process produces a finer, more delicate effect than the more usual copper-wheel engraving method.

Danish light fitting

The new fluorescent light fitting illustrated below is produced in Denmark and has a plastic shade sand-blasted on the inside and polished on the outside. The metal top of the fitting is sprayed with white cellulose. It will take either one or two four-foot 40 watt fluorescent tubes, which are easily accessible by removing the matt brass end-plates that hold the plastic shade in position. The whole fitting is suspended by a

New fluorescent fitting now in production in Denmark.

white cotton-covered flex. Two fine wires, one at each end of the fitting, are used to steady it but are not noticeable from a distance; the impression of a fluorescent tube suspended only by the flex is much lighter than the usual arrangement of chains or pipes. The chokes and starter lamp are inside the fitting which was designed by Architect Acton Bjørn for Louis Poulson and Co A/S Copenhagen.

The Svedberg chair referred to in the report below.

METHODS & MATERIALS

Chair development

The development of an armchair suitable for rough usage in the house-rooms of a public school has stimulated some interesting experiments by the makers of the chair, Walker-Symondson Ltd, of Ruislip, Middlesex. Walker-Symondson are contractors rather than quantity-production chair manufacturers, and the design (3, below) has been developed in relation to joiners'-shop methods.

Its unspectacular appearance gives little indication of the amount of experimental work put into it. As a preliminary, the very different-looking chair shown at 1 was developed. This chair was made in Honduras mahogany with laminated ash rails; the seat was of ash upholstered with Dunlopillo and covered in Tygan woven plastic fabric. The purpose of designing and making it was two-fold: (*a*) to show how handcraft can be used in conjunction with the machine – the shaped laminated back-rails, carefully let into the canted legs, called for a high degree of craftsmanship; and (*b*), to establish the principle of crossed leg-rail construction. The chair was similar in many respects to the packet chair designed a few years ago by Elias Svedberg in Sweden – a coincidence only, for the designer of the English chair (Gordon Symondson, MSIA, a director of the firm) had not seen the Swedish chair, but arrived independently at a similar solution.

After this experimental model had proved itself satisfactory in tests, a prototype of the kind of armchair required by the school (Haileybury Imperial Service College) was developed. The principle of construction was the same: crossed rails were used again, though placed lower down. Now, however, the rails were tapered, providing extra depth at the halved intersection and a wedge shape for the unshouldered ends entering the leg mortices – thus retaining the advantages of the hole and tapered spar joints used in traditional stickback construction.

The general proportions of this chair were influenced by the size and shape of the stickback armchairs previously in use at the school. The materials used in it were also traditional – beech for the frame and elm for the seat. It is a matter of opinion whether the new chairs or the Windsor stickbacks are the better-looking, but the new design is much stronger: this conclusion, the manufacturers state, has been reached by the school authorities after severe testing.

The shaping of the back leg has been criticised on the grounds that it necessitates a certain amount of cutting diagonally across the grain, but the cross-section of the leg is considered ample to offset any slight weakness which this might cause. "It would be an unlucky choice of timber that would give a grain length of less than about eight or nine inches," the designer states.

The front legs are attached to the seat by a wedged tenon joint. The arms, steam-bent, also contribute to the ruggedness of the whole.

The final illustration shows the production model of the Haileybury chair. This, as can be seen, has been modified to give better support for the user's back: a reasonable degree of comfort was considered essential as these chairs are used mainly in the boys' leisure time. The shaped back-rest is held in place by an extension of the back legs above the line of the bow-shaped arm-rest.

Three stages in the development of the Walker-Symondson chair : 1, an experiment in crossed-rail construction ; 2, the prototype, and 3, the production model, of the chair "for rough usage in public schools."

CONFERENCES

Design and the Co-ops

The first Co-operative conference ever convened to study the Co-operative Movement's responsibility for design was held in Harrogate from 28 to 30 March. The conference was called by the Co-operative Union Ltd in association with the Council of Industrial Design, and some 50 delegates attended representing 19 large retail societies, the CWS, the Co-operative Union, the Men's Guild and the *Co-operative News*. The subject for discussion was the role of top management in improving standards of design in consumer goods, display, shop windows, lettering, typography, etc.

Speakers included Gordon Russell on "Design and its Importance," W. J. Worboys, a director of ICI and member of the Council of Industrial Design, on "The Manufacturer's Responsibility," Geoffrey Dunn of Dunn's of Bromley, a member of the Council, on "The Retailer's Responsibility," A. N. Silver, Dry Goods Manager of the London Co-operative Society, also a member of the Council, on "Co-operative Opportunities," and Lennart Uhlin of the Swedish Co-operative Union on "What the Swedish Co-operative Movement has accomplished in Design." R. S. Edwards, chairman of the Council of Industrial Design, and F. Oakley, chairman of the Education Executive, Co-operative Union, summed up.

The conference agreed that the Co-operative Movement has a special concern and opportunity in questions of design both on grounds of commercial desirability and social responsibility, and that action should be taken at all levels of the Movement from the manufacturer through the wholesaler and retailer to the consumer. A serious study of the present design policy of the Movement was advocated with the possible setting-up of some central design advice service staffed by qualified designers. It was agreed that department managers hold the most powerful position in the Movement as far as taste and design are concerned and that little progress could be made without their support. Courses and exhibitions were suggested for the benefit both of department managers and retail and wholesale sales staff. Establishment of experimental departments in retail

New appointment for Alec Davis

Alec Davis has resigned the editorship of DESIGN magazine to take up an appointment as Sales and Advertising Manager with E. Fogarty and Co Ltd, pillow and bedding manufacturers, of Boston, Lincolnshire.

Mr Davis joined the staff of the Council of Industrial Design in December 1947, and has edited DESIGN from its inception in 1949 to the present issue. He has written extensively on design, marketing and similar subjects, and is the author of a recently published book on *Type in Advertising*.

stores or separate shops where new ideas could be tried out was also urged, and the conference considered that much more could be done in the Co-operative Movement in the way of consumer education on the lines successfully followed in Sweden.

It was generally accepted that owing to the constitution of the Movement progress must be slow but that it is high time that Co-operators added an interest in design to their other enthusiasms. The representatives of the Council of Industrial Design undertook to further this interest in every way possible.

Electrical equipment course for salesmen

A course for buyers and salesmen of domestic electrical equipment will be held at Urchfont Manor Residential College (Wiltshire) from 26 to 30 May. Subjects to be considered are the salesman's responsibility in influencing public taste, the social influence of electricity, and general design principles for electrical equipment.

The course is organised by the Council of Industrial Design and the Urchfont Manor College authorities.

BOOKS

Questions of taste

In *Art and Everyman – a Basis for Appreciation* (Vol. 1), by Margaret H. Bulley (Batsford 45*s*) the author has developed her well-tried method of comparison and contrast, with the aid of a wide range of illustration, and has produced a formidable volume which has the house and its furnishings as its subject. (A second volume will be devoted to painting and sculpture.) Miss Bulley's first assumption is that the good and bad in art are determined by an absolute canon. An imaginary young couple, John and Mary, about to furnish their first home and having the happy knack of providing the right answers, are our companions under instruction and loyally support their creator's belief that Art is for Everyman.

The conclusions of this couple are balanced by a real-life interrogation of some 750 people ranging from university students to farm workers, the former getting about 80 per cent of the answers right, the latter being convicted of Ghastly Bad Taste. Later, perhaps, when the present volume has been well digested by those in outer darkness, a further test might be arranged and the new percentage of right and wrong answers compared.

Miss Bulley's belief in the impersonal nature of her judgment will stimulate much argument and criticism. But her zeal and sincerity cannot be questioned, and no matter whether the reader, exercising his own choice among her contrasts of good and evil, finds himself among the university students or among the farm workers, he will certainly enjoy the great array of illustrations (this is primarily a huge picture-book) which attest so admirably man's inexhaustible fecundity in the visual arts.

H. S. WILLIAMSON

Businesslike printing

Design in Business Printing, by Herbert Spencer (Sylvan Press 12*s* 6*d*) was written at the request of Tillotsons of Bolton, who, as printers of it, hope that it will stimulate users of print, printers and designers to evolve more economic methods of production in business printing. This is a worthwhile aim for any book on the subject of printing today and Mr Spencer puts forward some very good examples of well-designed business printing of many kinds; he also gives some concrete examples of redesigns which have saved man-hours and therefore money. This is an excellent precedent for other writers on design: had there been more of these examples, accountants everywhere would have seen to it that their colleagues the print-buyers studied the book.

As teacher of typography as well as a practising typographer specialising in business printing, Herbert Spencer has evolved his own very characteristic style which avoids, wherever possible, the use of centred matter. It is indeed a pity that he cannot abide any examples which are centred on a sheet of paper; the styles shown in his book – "a personal exposition", as the publishers call it – are limited accordingly. He describes asymmetrical layout as flexible, but surely it is not the answer to *every* design problem? Captions that refer to illustrations overleaf can be very irksome and need not have been used so frequently in this book.

The examples showing excellent solutions to such difficult and neglected problems as pages of technical abstracts, tabular matter, and the pages from a film-strip publisher's catalogue should be studied for close attention to detail and simplification of typesetting composition with complicated copy.

This is certainly a very good book for all who want to know more about the design of economic business printing. It could easily save its cost many times over.

P.H.

Wallpaper book

The two wallpapers illustrated on page 18 are from an admirable selection shown by The Wall Paper Manufacturers in their latest sample book. Called *One Hundred Contemporary Wallpapers*, this book has been produced to help architects, interior designers and exhibition designers. The vast majority of the papers illustrated cost less than 10*s* a piece, and they can be obtained from merchants throughout the country. Copies of the book are available from The Wall Paper Manufacturers Ltd, Architects' Department, Kings House, King Street West, Manchester 3, or from the London office, 125 High Holborn, WC1.

IN BRIEF

After this summer, the Ministry of Education will cease to award its Art Teacher's Diploma. Under revised arrangements, intending art teachers will take courses arranged by Area Training Organisations and the title of the award to be given will rest with these organisations.

Trade-name of the Remington Rand photo-copier referred to in last month's issue (p. 25) is *Remflex*, not Reflex as stated.

Eric E. Lucking arranged the grouping of the fabrics for the colour photograph (by Dennis Hooker, AIBP, ARPS) reproduced on page 12.

From a wide range of printed matter for the British Federation of Master Printers congress, arranged last year by the East Anglian Master Printers' Alliance. Designed and produced by a member of the Alliance, Balding and Mansell Ltd, Wisbech. Art director, Charles Rosner; lettering by Betty Dougherty.

Better facilities for printing-design students?

continued from page 19

"It would be no service to the industry if, in an endeavour to give practical experience to potential designers, the more urgent need to train the general body of craftsmen were prejudiced."

3: *Local education authorities should ensure that their scholarship arrangements make it possible for financial assistance to be given to enable specially selected apprentices attending part-time classes to transfer to full-time attendance for a course in design.*

4: *Trade associations should also consider the possibility of offering a limited number of scholarships to enable gifted apprentices to take full-time courses in design.*

5: *Practical instruction in trade processes [compositor's work and so forth] – to the limited extent recommended – should, for students in a four-year full-time design course, be confined to the last two years.*

This recommendation was made "to obviate the danger . . . that some art students may obtain a smattering of practical training and then leave school for employment before completing their full training as designers."

The sub-committee's eleven members included four representatives of printing and allied trade unions.

A.D.

OVERSEAS APPOINTMENT VACANT

Sudan Government

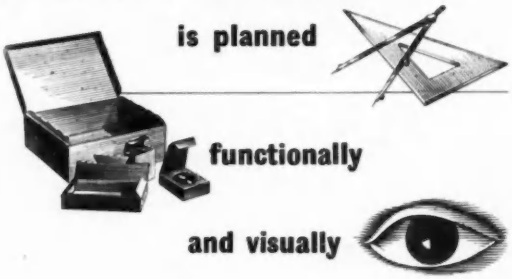
The Ministry of Education requires Senior Assistants, aged 25 to 40 or thereabouts, for service in the Sudan Khartoum Technical Institute Department of Arts and Crafts. Candidates must possess either (*a*) good qualifications in Drawing and Painting and be experienced in Arts teaching, preference being given to a graduate of the Slade or Royal Academy Schools or an A.R.C.A., or (*b*) good qualifications in general art subjects and have specialised in design and craft work. Crafts of particular interest include Metalwork, Jewellery and Stone and Wood Carving.

Appointments will be on probation for a Short Term Contract for two years in a salary scale £E.950 to £E.1675 with post-service bonus. Starting rate would be determined according to age, qualifications and experience and a cost-of-living allowance may also be payable. Outfit allowance of £E.50 on appointment. There is at present NO INCOME TAX in the Sudan. Free passage on appointment.

Further particulars and application form will be sent on receipt of a postcard only addressed to the Sudan Agent in London, Wellington House, Buckingham Gate, London SW1 quoting "1009 (*a*)" or "(*b*)" and name and address in BLOCK LETTERS.

Other classified advertisements appear on page 36

CLELAND PACKAGING



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Be it a small carton to carry a light article or a large display outer to contain dozens, sound planning and careful production will ensure presentation in the best traditions of Industrial Design functionally and visually.

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Lacrinoid offers unusual facilities to manufacturers of industrial and commercial products. The firm maintains a well equipped Research & Design Department, and by making its own tools and moulds it short-circuits delays in production.

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EXHIBITION AND CONFERENCE ROOMS available in West End. Apply British Colour Council, 13 Portman Square, W1. Welbeck 4185

DRAWING OFFICE SERVICES

DRAWING OFFICE FACILITIES available; designs, calculations, drawings, tracings. Perspective, exploded and "ghost" assemblies drawn from standard orthographic projections. A comprehensive, confidential service; all drawings bear clients' names only. The Coniston Engineering Co, 72 Upper Tooting Road, SW17. Telephone: BALham 6049.

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